

(b) Only those lines required on urgent operational and strategic considerations are proposed to be converted in a phased manner. At present only about 15966 kms. of metre gauge/narrow gauge lines have been identified for conversion during 8th and 9th Plan periods. No time schedule can be fixed for conversion of all metre gauge/narrow gauge lines as this will depend on availability of resources.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Proposals were received from the Government of Gujarat for conversion of Rajkot-Veraval, Navlakhi-Wankaner-Maliya, Surendranagar-Bhavnagar, Viramgam-Mahesana-Patan, Bedi Port, Surendranagar-Rajula, Kolal-Vijapur, Ahmedabad-Himmatnagar, Dhrangadhra-Kuda, Gandhidham-Bhuj, Joravarnagar-Sayala, and Bharuch-Dehej. Out of these, Gauge Conversion of Wankaner-Dahinsara-Navlakhi and Dahinsara-Maliya Miyana and Viramgam-Mahesana is in progress through Private Capital under the BOLT Scheme and are targetted to be completed within this financial year. Gauge Conversion of Gandhidham-Bhuj at Rajkot-Veraval section would be started shortly. The remaining proposals are either under examination or could not be taken up due to unremunerativeness and constraint of resources.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) Details have been indicated in reply to part (d) above.

Black*Pepper Production

*380. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the total percentage of black pepper production in the State of Kerala;

(b) whether the Government are aware that heavy incidence of pests, diseases, climatic vagaries and price fluctuation have acted as serious deterrents to the investment in the better crop management;

(c) whether the Government of Kerala has submitted any proposal for launching of Technology Mission on the black pepper; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The State of Kerala contributed 97.9 percent to the total black pepper production in India during 1994-95.

(b) During my visit to Kerala, low incidence of disease and pest was reported to me. However, no serious incidence of pests or disease of black pepper was reported in Kerala during 1994-95 and 1995-96. The average yearly wholesale prices of black pepper at Cochin have steadily increased from Rs. 2779/- quintal in 1992 to Rs. 7575/- quintal in 1995.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The State Government has proposed a Technology Mission for black pepper for implementation as a state activity. The Mission envisages to pool available resources and efforts, and integrate the activities of all State and Central institution/agency located in the State and involved in development of this crop to work towards common objective of improving production and productivity of black pepper. The Ministry has endorsed the proposal in principle and made appropriate provision in the 1996-97 budget for implementing production oriented components.

[Translation]

Central Hindi Advisory Committee

3009. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the time by which the Central Hindi Advisory Committee is likely to be set up;

(b) the time by which the Hindi Advisory Committee as per the pattern of Hindi Advisory Committee of all the Ministries would be set up in the Prime Minister's Office to ensure the implementation of the official language;

(c) whether due to non constitution of the Hindi Advisory and official language Implementation Committees in the Prime Minister's office, the implementation of official language in the Public Sector in the country is suffering; and

(d) the steps being taken to improve upon the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to constitute any committee as Central Hindi Advisory Committee. Hon'ble Member of Parliament perhaps is referring to the Central Hindi Committee. Constitution of this Committee is under process.

(b) to (d). The position with regard to the Prime Minister's Office is different from that of other Ministries/Depts. It is a small Office which renders secretarial assistance to the Prime Minister. In view of this, it was not felt necessary to constitute a Hindi Advisory Committee and Official Language Implementation Committee in Prime Minister's Office. A Joint Secretary has been entrusted with the duty of implementing instructions issued for the progressive use of Hindi.

[English]

Life Line Express

3010. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any assessment has been made so far about the utility of the train called 'Life Line Express'?

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the expenditure incurred on the maintenance and operation of this train by the Railways since its inception?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). The Life Line Express has been launched and run by a voluntary organisation. As per the Memorandum of Understanding the Ministry of Railways were only to make available remodel, run/stable 3 BG Coaches for Impact India Foundation. All social, technical and medical aspect including medical equipment and staff required for running this mobile hospital are being undertaken by the Impact India foundation. Maintenance and operation charges of these coaches are being borne by Impact India Foundation.

Rail Development Projects in Orissa

3011. SHRI MURALIDHAR JENA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railway Development Projects in Orissa have been shelved and the money allotted for these projects has been transferred to the other States;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether shelving of these projects is likely to cause escalation in the cost of these projects; and

(d) the amounts already spent on the ongoing Railway projects in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

(d) The amount so far spent upto 31.3.96 on ongoing New Lines, Doubling and Gauge Conversion Railways Projects in Orissa State is about Rs. 950 crores.

Pension Adalats

3012. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Pension Adalats organised in all Zones of the Railways; and

(b) the number of pensions cases decided by Pension Adalats in each of the Zones during 1995 and pending as on June 30, 1996?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Pension Adalats in Zonal Headquarters and Divisions are held once in every year, i.e. on 15th of December.

(b) Number of grievances decided and the number of grievances pending in the last pension adalat

conducted on 15.12.95 are as under. Figures as on 30.06.96 are not available.

Railway	No. of cases decided	No. of cases Pending
Central	768	130
Eastern	440	4
Northern	333	47
North Eastern	207	64
Northeast Ft.	76	22
Southern	636	46
South Central	226	17
South Eastern	104	29
Western	379	2

Pension to Freedom Fighters

3013. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of freedom fighters enjoying pension as on March 31, 1996, State-wise;

(b) whether the proven absconders of National struggle are considered for sanction of freedom fighters' pension;

(c) the amount of pension given to the freedom fighters by the States and Centre, separately; and

(d) the amount spent on this head during 1995-96?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). From the inception of the Scheme Freedom Fighters' pension has been sanctioned to 162757 persons upto 31.03.1996. A Statement showing state-wise details of persons who have been sanctioned freedom fighters pension by the Central Government is attached.

(b) Freedom Fighters who participated in the National Struggle with proven suffering of atleast six months abscondence against an executive order are considered for sanction of freedom fighters' pension.

(c) The Freedom Fighters are drawing Central pension at the rate of Rs. 1500 per month. The rates of pension granted by the State Government various from State to State. However, the details of the rates of State pension are not available.

(d) The total amount of Rs. 1,31,38,51,787 has been spent on Payment of Central pension under Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme during the financial year 1995-96.